

(c) The average time taken for issuing passports by this office is approximately four weeks after receipt of a complete application.

(d) The number of cases pending for issue of passports for more than six months in this office is 1594.

(e) Cases in this category are pending owing to questions regarding the eligibility of the applicant for issue of passport, and necessary investigations are in progress.

[English]

Upgradation of Medical College

2780. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have any proposal under consideration for the upgradation/modernisation of diagnostic services at the Tirumala Devashom (T.D.) Medical College at Alapuzha in Kerala; and

(b) if so, the details thereof with estimated costs thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. However a proposal for the setting up of an Institute of Imageology and Laboratory Services at Medical College, Alapuzha was received in Planning Commission from the Govt. of Kerala for special Central assistance. The State Government was advised to put up a comprehensive proposal as a part of the 9th Plan.

Upgradation State Highways in A.P.

2781. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh had submitted proposals covering a length of 4812 Kms. to the Union Ministry vide letter No.1612/R11(2) 91-3 dt. 24.2.1992 for upgradation of State Highways to National Highways;

(b) if so, whether out of these proposals the Union Government have sanctioned State Highways from Kurnool to Chittoor to a length of 362 Kms as National Highway No. 18 in January 1993;

(c) if so, the fate of other proposals;

(d) to what extent the works of the approved highways have been completed;

(e) the time by which all proposals will be accepted; and

(f) the time by which works on these projects is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b). Yes. Sir.

(c) to (f). Due to paucity of funds it will be difficult to declare any more roads as National Highway. original works contig Rs.720 lakhs have been sanctioned and are in different stages of progress.

Four Laning of N.H.47

2782. SHRI N.K. PREMCHANDRAN : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to convert the two lane traffic of National Highway-47 to 4 lane traffic from Trivandrum to Ernakulam; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) and (b). There is no provision in the Eighth Five Year Plan for 4 laning from Trivandrum to Sherthalai on NH-47, except from Aroor to Sherthalai (around Ernakulam) for which the work is in progress.

Luggage per Haj Pilgrim

2783. SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any restriction on the maximum luggage per Haj pilgrim during Haj journey;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether extra charges are lavied for extra luggage; and

(d) if so, the total amount collected for extra luggage during the last three years and how the said total collection has been utilised-whether paid to the airways or utilized by the Haj Committee, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) and (b). Pilgrims going for Haj under arrangements made by the Central Haj Committee have been allowed to carry 35 kgs. of personal baggage on their outward journey to Saudi Arabia and 45 kgs. including provision for Zam Zam (Holy water). on their return journey to India.

(c) As per accepted norms of international flights, excess baggage charges are levied beyond the permissible baggage allowance. This generally happens on Pilgrim's return flights when they bring more luggage.

(d) Excess baggage collection for Haj 1994, 1995 and 1996 was Rs.24,93,330/-, Rs.34,14,307/- and Rs. 18,56,726/- respectively. Collection of excess baggage charges is made by Air India on behalf of the Central Haj Committee and the amounts collected are settled during the reconciliation of accounts between Air India and Central Haj Committee every year.